



Terry Husseman
Outstanding
Waste Reduction & Recycling in
Public Schools Awards Program

Annual Overview for 1999-2000 Cycle

Washington State Department of Ecology
Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program

Publication #00-07-033
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Overview

This 11-year-old award recognizes waste-reduction and recycling excellence among elementary, junior and senior high schools. Two awards of \$2,500 and 10 of \$1,000 will be given out. Schools are encouraged to use the money to improve school waste-reduction and recycling programs. Renamed "Terry Husseman" awards posthumously for Terry's championing of the awards and the cause.

All of Washington's 1,700 public schools received applications to apply for the Terry Husseman Outstanding Waste Reduction and Recycling in Public Schools Awards. The annual awards program was established by the Legislature in 1989 as part of the Waste Not Washington Act, and is administered by Ecology's Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program. A total of 123 cash awards have been received by Washington schools over the past eleven years.



On May 12, 2000, at a ceremony in the state Capitol rotunda, Ecology Deputy Director Dan Silver welcomed and congratulated the award recipients. Ecology Manager Cullen Stephenson presented \$15,000 in cash awards to twelve schools. Each winning school was judged on the basis of comprehensive, efficient, and innovative approaches to waste reduction and recycling during the 1998-99 school year. The 1999 ceremony was attended by 150 school children.

Several of this year's winning schools had also won awards in past years. They continue to build on previous accomplishments and win new recognition, this time for improving their award winning programs.

Award winning schools carry out active waste reduction and recycling programs during the school year. Each school also has an education component to support their waste reduction and recycling goals, often based on Ecology's waste management teacher training and curriculum package, "A-Way with Waste." In varying numbers, each school recycles aluminum and other metals, glass, cardboard and mixed paper, white paper, newsprint, food wastes, and plastic. The schools also practice many classroom and office waste reduction techniques, such as making two-sided copies, purchasing recycled products, reuse of surplus items, etc. Some of the additional innovative activities include:

- creative art projects using materials that are typically recycled or thrown-away;
- using glass and plastic containers for everything from sorting supplies to conducting hydroponic experiments;
- parting-out or stripping discarded computers of useable materials then using the materials to rebuild existing computers; and
- using left-over lunches to feed area wildlife or sent home to families with hungry pets.

Many schools practice environmental stewardship with school-based beautification projects. School recycling programs often extend into the local communities. In several cases the school program is the largest recycling effort the community has, and the reason why local citizens, businesses, and tribes are staying involved in the recycling effort.

Outstanding Waste-Reduction and Recycling Program

Our judges' criteria when scoring this category included: how the school reduces its waste before recycling, how efficient and creative the recycling program is, how the school includes or services the community, and the educational element in the program. Both of this year's winners will receive \$2,500.

Discovery Elementary School. Discovery Elementary School is located in Pierce County. By involving students, staff, and the community, Discovery has recycled more than 287,000 pounds of paper. That is equivalent to 174 pounds of paper for each student at the school for the four years that the program has been in operation. In order to save resources and money, students and staff began practicing recycling and waste reduction. To keep participants educated about recycling, the school produces a weekly newsletter that is sent to students and parents. It also produced a brochure and has plans for advertising in the local newspaper.

Cashmere Middle School in Chelan County started their program ten years ago and each year it is improved and changed to meet the needs of the school and community. More than 2,000 students have gone through the program and their influence is having a positive effect on the area. Residents and businesses donate material to the middle school project. The school accepts 14 different types of recyclables, including glass and Styrofoam. The recycling club, open to seventh and eighth grade students, is responsible for the collection system within the school. Recycling boxes in classrooms, offices, and workspaces are collected and sorted each week by club members. The elementary and high schools are serviced by the recycling club and have similar collection methods. Many of the teachers at the school have taken the “Away with Waste” workshop and share new information at staff meetings. This past year, Cashmere middle school has recycled over 80,000 pounds of materials and earned about \$2,000.

Best Waste-Reduction Program

The criteria our judges looked for in this category included how the school reduces its waste before recycling, how efficient and creative the waste reduction methods are, and the extent of the educational element in the program. This year's winners will receive \$1,000.

The following three schools are all located in Whatcom County. Each school thoroughly educates its teachers on waste reduction during employee orientation. The schools have also integrated waste reduction, recycling, and environmental stewardship into several aspects of the student curricula. Each of these schools has found some innovative ways of **reusing** materials thereby reducing the waste.

Kendall Elementary: Kendall elementary school children find creative ways of reusing their waste. They made a 7-foot blue whale from one week's worth of their recycled paper. The younger students learn to tie shoes by practicing on discarded tennis shoes, and old clothing came to life in the form of kid-sized scarecrows. Even broken pieces of crayon get used. One resourceful teacher melts them down and makes new ones.

Harmony Elementary: At Harmony, children practice their drills on re-usable laminated paper. Teachers take advantage of current technology by using a computer with a projector, saving paper and transparencies, and reducing the use of the toxic white-board markers. Harmony also has a creative streak: they transform a multitude of discarded items into works of art. I hear they also do some amazing repair jobs around the school using cardboard.

Mount Baker Junior/Senior High: Mt. Baker Junior/Senior High serves as the district's master composter. Children are responsible for sorting wastes into compost, recycle, or garbage bins. Material is picked up from the cafeteria and added to the compost pile, along with sawdust from the wood shop. The students help turn the compost pile using a tractor. The students gather data on weights and conditions then chart the data on their

computers. An old cement truck was donated to the school recently for use in aerating their pile. They are working on connecting a conveyor belt up to the truck so that their entire process will be automated.

Wilson Creek Junior/Senior High School in Grant County has been practicing waste reduction methods along with recycling for more than 19 years and it shows. The students created a mission statement, wrote a policy, and set goals. They are developing a comprehensive, model waste-reduction program that will include innovative strategies for transportation and waste management. When complete, the model will be available for use by other schools around the state. Wilson Creek strives to set an example for other major organizations in their County. We certainly hope that others follow such a well-organized leader!

West Valley High in Yakima started its program three years ago. The students had two major goals in mind: instituting a waste reduction and recycling program and providing their special-education students with vocational skills necessary for their future success. Education on waste-reduction and recycling techniques and in-house processes is provided to both students and staff on a continual basis. West Valley's program has provided an avenue for students to develop and practice essential job skills and work behaviors.

Best Recycling Program

The criteria our judges looked for in this category included: the amount of material recycled by the school, the number of different materials recycled, and the rate of the amount recycled in relationship to the school's population. This year's winners will each receive \$1,000.

Toppenish Junior High School. Toppenish Junior High School in Yakima County operates the TOPP-RECYCLE program. The students, staff, and community work together on this program and they regularly get positive feedback. The students receive valuable work experience, while the community receives valuable service. Toppenish Junior High is bridging the gap between public education and local businesses. Students at Toppenish are truly special and this program provides them with opportunities that result in positive behaviors and life choices.

Walla Walla High's recycling program is operated by the student ecology club. Each week, student volunteers collect the materials from the bins placed around the campus. The ecology club loads the materials and transports them to the recycling center in town. The club spends any money earned on special projects, such as campus beautification projects, fundraisers, and bin replacement. Walla Walla High recycled almost 24,000 pounds of materials this year. The club members earned about \$900 from their ventures. They also earned the respect of their peers and teachers for all their hard work.

Woodinville High, in King County, started recycling ten years ago. The special-education students and staff operate the program. The students spend a portion of each school day working in the recycling center. Each day, three students and two staff members go out into the community and collect recycling from district offices and local businesses. Last year, Woodinville High recycled almost 20,000 pounds of material and earned a little over \$1,000. The students are proud to be involved in the program and to be learning vocational skills that they can use after graduation. This program exemplifies the positive contributions that all students, differently-abled or not, can make to their school, community and the environment.

Waldron Island School from San Juan County. Waldron Island School is a remote and necessary two-room school in the San Juan Islands, serving 8 students, grades K-8. The island has no refuse or recycling station, though the two closest ferry-served islands do offer both waste facilities and many recycling opportunities. Transportation to and from Waldron is provided by private boat. Any recycling effort requires items to be handled a minimum of five times: from school to dock by truck, from truck to boat at the Waldron dock, from boat to dock at Orcas or San Juan or Bellingham, then from dock to truck again, and finally from truck to

recycler. This trip involves a minimum of eight land miles and eight water miles to Orcas, or as much as 25 water miles to Bellingham.

Getting anything on and off Waldron requires a great deal of energy. Thus, recycling or waste reduction is a major concern. Due to our small size, Waldron Island School does not generate a great deal of waste. However, the school is also the community center, and we feel the school has been instrumental in influencing waste reduction at community potlucks by providing dishes and silverware, and that the island food coop breakdowns where we've influenced the choice of packaging by not offering unburnable waste facilities at the school.

Sadie Halstead Middle from Pend Oreille County. Sadie Halstead students teach each other about recycling, through the group of students that sort/empty the classroom collection boxes. They remind their teachers and classmates when there are items not allowed in our program in the boxes. They grade each classroom's efforts weekly. Information on local and state recycling efforts is kept in a glass display case in the main hallway helps to keep the topic active in the school. They also post year to year efforts, weights recycled and cost of the garbage bills to remind staff and students as to why their continued efforts are important.

When certain studies are taking place, many teachers ask the school recycling coordinator to come speak with the class on recycling and the school's program. This is a wonderful time for "hands" on examples for students to understand what their efforts accomplish. Seeing one ream of paper weighing 8 lbs. And a case weighing 20 lbs. help the students to understand how much 2,180 lbs. is, which is the amount of paper recycled in a month's time..An array of videos is available too all teachers on composting, recycling, and other like topics also help to educate students at Sadie Halstead.

Staff at Sadie Halstead make sure they purchase supplies that contain measurable amounts of recycled content. They avoid using Styrofoam products in their kitchen/lunch program, use washable trays and the Food Service Director works hard to do her part to reuse and recycle within her program.

Sadie Halstead involves their community in many ways. They provide drop boxes for recycling of ink cartridges and their compost exhibit is open to the public.